

Make Your Comments to the LBC Count!

If you plan to offer remarks during the public comment portion of Local Boundary Commission hearings concerning the City of Homer's annexation proposal, the following tips are offered to make your comments more effective.

1. **Come prepared and informed.** Carefully plan your comments. Prior to the hearings, you may wish to review the following materials (available at the Homer City Hall and Homer Public Library; also generally available on LBC Web site and through DCED):
 - A. the standards established in State law for annexation to cities (these are also summarized in # 2 below);
 - B. the City of Homer's annexation petition;
 - C. the fourteen Responsive Briefs along with the 168 letters commenting on the petition;
 - D. the City of Homer's Reply Brief;
 - E. the Preliminary Report and Final Report of the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development regarding the City of Homer's annexation proposal.
2. **Provide relevant comments.** The LBC's decision on the annexation proposal will be guided by standards established in law that are applied to the facts of the City of Homer's proposal. Comments that address those standards and facts will be most helpful to the LBC. In summary, the standards require a determination by the LBC that in this case:
 1. the territory is compatible in character with the City of Homer;
 2. the territory does not overlap the boundaries of another local government (if it does, the proposal must also satisfy detachment standards);
 3. the territory is contiguous to the City of Homer (absent a compelling reason for annexation of non-contiguous territory);
 4. annexation will not deny any civil or political right to any individual because of race, color, creed, sex or national origin;
 5. the proposed boundaries do not include large unpopulated areas (except when justified by the application of other annexation standards);
 6. the combined population of the City of Homer and the territory is sufficiently large and stable to support the extension of city government;

7. together, the City of Homer and the territory have the human and financial resources to provide essential city services on an efficient, cost-effective level;
8. the City of Homer has provided a practical plan for the extension of services into the territory;
9. the proposed expanded City of Homer boundaries include all land and water necessary to provide the full development of essential city services on an efficient, cost-effective level;
10. the proposed expanded boundaries include only the existing local community, plus reasonably predictable growth, development, and public safety needs during the ten years following annexation;
11. the City of Homer is best able to provide essential city services to the territory;
12. a reasonable need for city government exists in the territory proposed for annexation;
13. annexation will serve the balanced best interests of the state, the territory to be annexed, and all political subdivisions affected by the annexation; and
14. annexation is in the best interests of the state.

Even if the Petition meets all of the standards, the LBC has discretion to approve or deny the proposal. Additionally, the LBC may amend the proposal or impose conditions. Therefore, comments may address public policy arguments that advocate a particular action on the Petition by the LBC, including approval, denial, amendment, or imposition of conditions.

3. Observe the rules.

- ☒ New written materials may not be filed at the hearing unless allowed by the LBC Chairman upon the showing of good cause.
- ☒ To ensure that everyone who wishes to speak during the public comment phase of the hearing will have an opportunity to do so, individuals should plan to limit their comments to three minutes each. Different time limits will apply to the Petitioner and Respondents.

4. Avoid repetition. If another speaker has addressed points to your satisfaction, you may wish to simply note that you agree with the earlier remarks, and spend your allotted time on relevant topics that have not yet been addressed.